

August 22, 2005

Afghanistan **Freedom** Combined Forces Command - Afghanistan **Watch**



Giving future Afghans a place
to learn, grow

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Photograph by Army Sgt. Matthew MacRoberts



An Afghan een brings two mortar rounds to Soldiers inspecting a village Aug. 8. The team was evaluating buildings and other structures there to determine if they would withstand a controlled detonation of unexploded ordnance. The village elders had contacted the Coalition about unexploded bombs around the village and a Soviet multiple rocket launcher missile embedded in their field.

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(Cover) Korean army Capt. Jun Hyoung Lee, an engineer, checks the measurements of rebar used to strengthen concrete supports in a school the Coalition is having built by local contractors. (Photo by Army Sgt. Matthew MacRoberts)

Afghanistan Freedom Watch

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Life support technicians inspect, service survival equipment

By Air Force Staff Sgt. Shad Eidson
416th Air Expeditionary Group Public Affairs

KARSHI-KHANABAD AIR BASE, Uzbekistan – The 774th Expeditionary Airlift Squadron's life support section is full of aircrew life support technicians who work hard every day because their work can mean life or death for C-130 Hercules aircrews and passengers.

Life support equipment always has to be in tip-top condition to be ready whenever a mishap may occur. They rigorously inspect all equipment because any one piece could make the difference during an in-flight emergency.

"I like to get the job done correctly because I know people's lives are at stake," said Air Force Master Sgt. Raymond France, life support technician, deployed from Carswell Field, Fort Worth, Texas.

France said their maintenance of life support equipment, especially equipment that stays on the aircraft, provides necessary protection in emergency situations. However, in a deployed environment, the other critical aspect of their job is the training they give to aircrews.

"Being an instructor is my favorite part of the job," said France, who started his military career in the Marine Reserves in Ebensburg, Pa.

"I really enjoy showing people how to use the equipment and teaching them life-saving actions. Out of all my careers, I enjoy my work in life support the most."

The primary training is completed back in the states, but in a deployed environment, the life support section's refresher training enhances the airman's ability to react to a situation.

Life support provides helmets, oxygen masks, parachutes, body armor, survival vests and related accessories, plus life preservers, life rafts, headsets, restraint harnesses, protective clothing kits, anti-exposure suits, night vision devices, weapons, and emergency passenger oxygen systems and other equipment items that have to be inspected regularly.

"We live by the phrase 'their life is in our hands,'" said Air Force Master Sgt. Karen Droste, life support NCOIC, deployed from the Georgia Air National Guard's 165th Airlift Wing out of Savannah. "We also follow a phrase taken from survival school - 'failing to prepare is preparing to fail.' I have not forgotten this



Photo by Army Spc. Blake Palmer

Master Sgt. Ray France an aircrew life support technician with the 774th Expeditionary Airlift Squadron inspects Night Vision Goggles after the aircrew returned from a mission.

phrase from survival school and it helps me stay focused on a daily basis to always do my job right the first time."

Besides providing emergency equipment on board the C-130 and training on life support equipment, life support provides refresher combat survival training to crewmembers in case they are forced into a survival situation.

A challenge for life support is the constant introduction of new technology, which improves crew member survivability or the chance to be rescued, she added.

"Technology is changing so rapidly that units back at their home station may not

have the equipment to train on before sending someone on a deployment," Droste said. "When the new equipment is already in use, someone in life support has to step up to the plate and get qualified on it and then train everyone else so that we can provide the support to keep aircrews alive."

It's an important job that should go unnoticed in the background, if everything goes well, said Droste.

"Everyone who deployed on this rotation did an outstanding job and I'm proud of each and every one of them," said Sergeant Droste. "There is nothing more that I could have asked for."

Team gets bang out of blowing cache

By Army Spc. BLake Palmer
Farah Provincial Reconstruction Team

FARAH PROVINCIAL RECONSTRUCTION TEAM, Afghanistan – When you hear thunder or a large bang in the distance, you usually think of a storm or a rifle range, but in Farah, Afghanistan it is the men of Explosive Ordnance Disposal Team 5.

They wake up morning after morning to go out, pick up weapon caches at the local police station, take them out to a secured area, and then blow them all.

"What a way to start your day every day," said a member of the team.

The team is the first in the Farah province and it has made a big impact to the surrounding area.

Led by Army Staff Sgt. Adam Whitman from Fort Benning GA., the team consists of two other members, Army Pfc. Osborne Low of San Diego, CA, and Army Pvt. Jerrod Nixon of Ebersburg, PA.

Their mission at Farah is to destroy enemy caches, remove bombs, and to locate and destroy IEDs. In the past three months the team has destroyed a total of 32,081 weapons, and 52,238 pounds of explosives. They have the highest number of destroyed ordnance in their company.

Whitman said being here in Farah is a dream assignment for an EOD Soldier.

"We get to destroy equipment, ammunition and to do our



(From left to right) Pvt. Jerrod Nixon, Pfc. Osborne Low and Staff Sgt. Adam Whitman, members of EOD 5, stand near a weapons cache they have rigged to destroy near Farah.

Photos by Armt Spc. Blake Palmer

job in a way that the training has taught us", he said.

The Provincial Reconstruction Team commander, Lt. Col. Andrew Santa-Pinter, has praised the team for the superb job they have done and hopes they will continue on doing a great job.

"This EOD team is the first in the PRT and the first assigned here at Farah. This experienced cadre has had great motivation on the work and are proactive to their job" said Santa-Pinter.

For the most part, the team continues to set high goals for themselves and for the PRT. They make sure that Soldiers are trained on the newest IED threats and what to look for while on patrols. They've helped to set up IED-hunter teams that patrol for IEDs and bombs on the highways in Afghanistan.

"By taking these steps and training soldiers they have made it safer in Farah" said Army Capt. David Burger, the Force Protection commander.

All in all, the team members of EOD 5 have done an excellent job in the Farah province. They continue to go out every day finding weapon caches and destroying capture weapons from the local authorities. The team itself has great experience behind them from their leader with eight years experience in the Army and the others with two years each.

Each has their own reasons why they got into this field, but all say the main reason is because they get to blow stuff up.



A weapons cache is detonated near Farah. Explosive Ordnance Disposal Team 5 has destroyed more than 32,000 weapons and more than 52,000 pounds of explosives.

Enduring Voices

What is the most important lesson you have learned on this deployment?



Army Spc. Jonathan Belcher
44th Signal Battalion
"I've learned to work with other U.S. forces, international and Afghan forces. It's very rewarding."



Sgt. Mitchell Hoover
C Company, 2nd Battalion, 504th Parachute Infantry Regiment
"The love for my brothers and my country every day. It's the only thing that gives us the will to fight."



Army Chief Warrant Craig Morrison
SETAF
"It takes contributions from the Coalition, Coalition partners, the host nation and international forces in order to achieve the end-state mission."



Air Force Staff Sgt. Michael VanDeusen
455th Expeditionary Security Forces Squadron
"To communicate with the people you work and deal with."

Freedom Watch Reader Survey

The staff of the Freedom Watch would like to serve you better, please take the time to fill out the reader survey. You may submit your answers online at freedomwatch@baf.afgn.army.mil or you can submit your answers may mail the survey to the address provided. All number ratings are a scale of 1 very poor, 2 poor, 3 adequate, 4 better than adequate 5 good and 6 very good.

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3. What date did you pick up this edition?
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6. How would you rate the quality of the stories? 1 2 3 4 5 6
7. How would you rate the quality of the photographs? 1 2 3 4 5 6
8. How do you like the new comic strip, Realiy Check? 1 2 3 4 5 6
9. Do the contents evenly cover events in Afghanistan?
10. Where do you thinkwe can improve coverage, content or photography?

Afghan doctor heals Organ-E locals

Medic returns to serve in post-Taliban recovery

By Army Pfc. Vincent Fusco
20th Public Affairs Detachment

FORWARD OPERATING BASE ANED, Afghanistan - Be they Afghan National Army soldiers or civilians, doctors are here to lend a hand to their own.

Dr. Nabi Sherzd, has been the doctor of the clinic here, since Nov. 2003.

His cousin and one of his assistants, Rahmatshah Zamani, is a medic and linguist.

Zamani has been working at the clinic since July 2002, and both have worked alongside the 82nd Airborne Division, 10th Mountain Division, 25th Infantry Division and the 1st Battalion, 508th Parachute Infantry Regiment.

The clinic treats 20 to 30 patients a day, but can accommodate up to 60, said Sherzd. The clinic treats ANA soldiers, general laborers and civilians, including school children and people from Organ-E, in emergency situations.

People come to the clinic for further treatment if the hospital downtown cannot treat them, said Zamani.

Patients are seen, they come to the gate and present a note of referral with a doctor's signature.

Patients here are seen on a traditional priority: women and children first, followed by men, said Sherzd. Waiting lines are divided between the genders.

Sherzd, a native Afghan, has been practicing medicine since he graduated from Karachi Medical University in

Pakistan in 1988, and worked with the American Red Cross in Pakistan from 1989 until 1991.

Zamani graduated from high school in Kabul and attended Abdali University medical school -- a school established by local doctors in Peshawar, Pakistan. He attended the school for 18 months, but had to leave for health reasons.

In 1994, Sherzd came back to Afghanistan and worked at a government hospital in Kabul, where he met and later married his wife. Six days after he started working there, the Taliban captured the city.

"We saw bad conditions, especially with the mullahs," said Sherzd. "The

He eventually treated the fighter, who later complained to the mayor at the time. When the mayor went to see Sherzd, he asked Sherzd a few questions and insulted him. Sherzd was put in jail for two days and three nights.

When he was released, he took his family back to Pakistan, where he ran a private clinic to make money and take care of his family.

"There was almost nothing here," said Zamani. "Nobody was allowed to go to school, only religious school."

"During Taliban times, we lost education," said Sherzd. "That was everything for us."

"After the Taliban's fall, we returned to the country [from Pakistan]," said Zamani.

Sherzd returned to Kabul to practice medicine at a private clinic after the Taliban fell.

In 2003, a friend persuaded Sherzd to return to Organ-E to work with the Coalition.

Over time, Sherzd has seen Coalition forces here in Organ-E build schools, clinics and roads, and provide school and clinic supplies, agricultural materials, generators and other forms of civic aid.

Sherzd and Zamani are grateful to the Coalition, and hope to see and be a part of the gradual rebuilding process working toward independence.

"The Coalition forces came to [dispose] of terror forces," said Sherzd. "We know that every Coalition Soldier has a mother, brother, house and country. They saved the Afghan people's life and saved my country, because we started from zero."

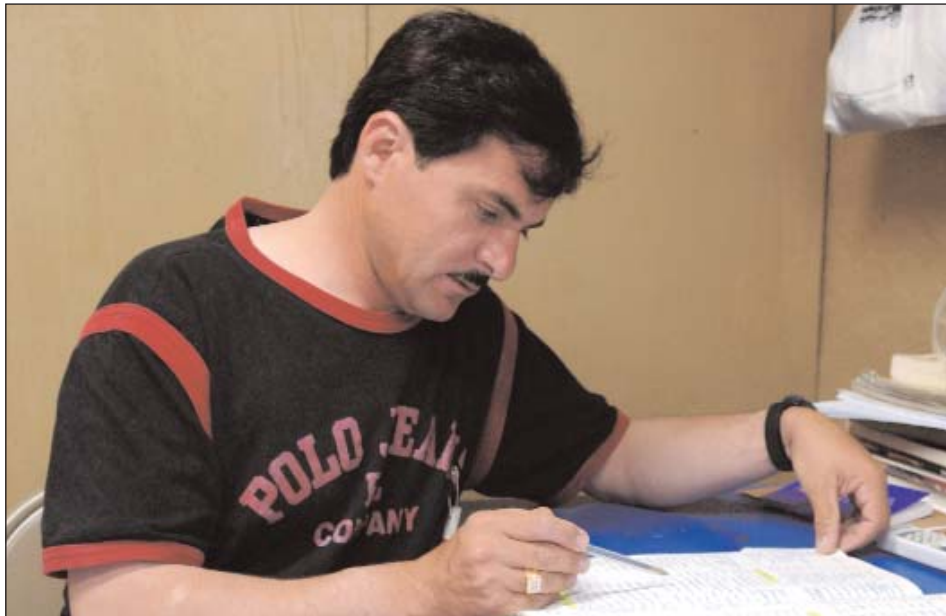


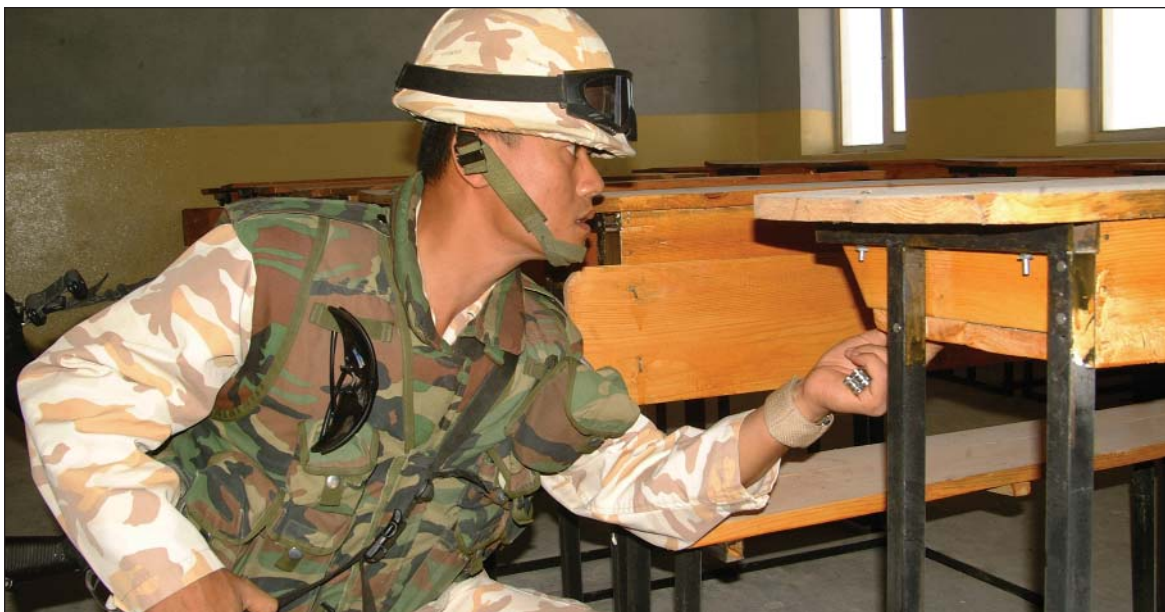
Photo by Army Pfc. Vincent Fusco

Dr. Nabi Sherzd, the doctor of the local national clinic at Forward Operating Base Aned, looks over his roster of patients who have come in during the day Aug. 6.

women [doctors and teachers] couldn't go to their jobs."

His wife could no longer work, so they went to Organ-E so Sherzd could work at the hospital downtown.

One day, he had five patients in one room and was ordered by a Taliban fighter, against local custom, to treat another Taliban fighter over a woman in the room. He refused, and for that, he was beaten with a cable.



Korean Army Capt. Jun Hyoung Lee, an engineer, checks a desk to ensure it's safe for children to use. Lee said the bolts sticking out of the bottom of the desk were a hazard and needed to be cut off.

Teams inspect Coalition funded projects *Schools to fill education void for Afghan youth*

By Army Sgt. Matthew MacRoberts
20th Public Affairs Detachment

BAGRAM AIRFIELD, Afghanistan - Members of the Tri-Province Provincial Reconstruction Team inspected three Coalition funded schools under construction Aug. 6.

Soldiers from the United States and Republic of Korea traveled through Parwan and Kapisa provinces to reach Jan Qadam, Sayad and Grandshak schools. The Korean army engineers checked on the construction progress, inspected the quality of the construction and asked the contractors if there were any materials or other things they needed for the projects at the schools.

Of the three schools, Jan Qadam is essentially finished and students are already attending classes in the building. Sayed School is in the final stages of construction. The concrete floors and supports are being prepared for pouring at the Grandshak School.

Korean Army Sgt. Yun Jin Hwang, an engineer and English/Korean translator for the PRT, spoke about the differences between the children of the Korean and the Afghan conflicts.

"My grandfather died during the war, and my father grew up without him," said Hwang. "They had schools and the inner workings of the country were still in place."

He said that the basic infrastructure is in tatters here.

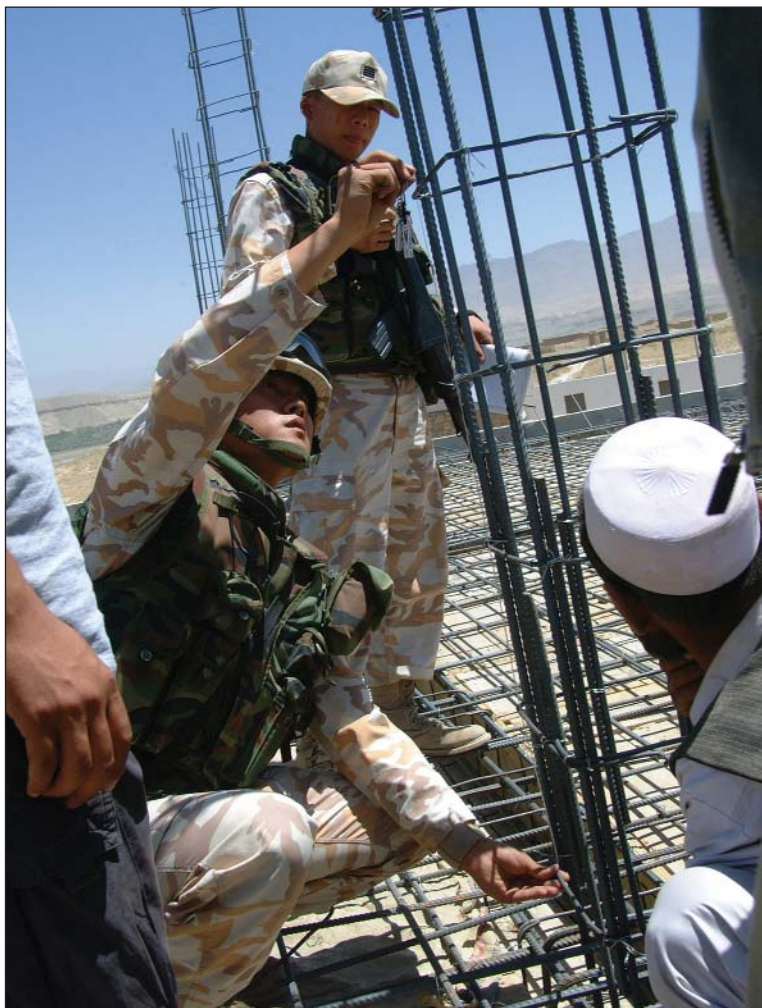
"What I have learned about the Korean War was that the children were asking soldiers for chocolates, candy and gum. (Afghan) children are asking for pens, pencils and other school supplies," he said.

For years there has been a shortage of modern schools and formal education in areas of Afghanistan.

"They are eager to learn and study," said Hwang.

The PRT works to ensure that villages that have a distinct lack of schools or other essential needs are evaluated and nominated for reconstruction projects.

"Infrastructure, schools and hospitals - those are funda-



Korean Army Capt. Jun Hyoung Lee, an engineer, checks the measurements of rebar used to strengthen concrete supports in a school the Coalition is having built by local contractors.

Photos by Army Sgt. Matthew MacRoberts



(Left) Korean Army engineers visited the Jan Qadam Middle School Aug. 6 to inspect the Coalition funded school.

(Below) Children at Jan Qadam Middle School wait while soldiers hand out school supplies during their inspection of the building.



Korean Army Capt. Jun Hyoung Lee, an engineer, reviews technical plans for a school with the construction contractor. Lee is attached to the Tri-Province Provincial Reconstruction Team based at Bagram Airfield.

mental things in life," said Hwang

Korean Army Capt. Jun Hyoung Lee, an engineer from the Korean Support Group attached to the PRT, said "I was surprised at first about the lack of infrastructure in the area."

Lee and the other engineer officers verify the schools are built to standard. This ensures the safety of the children who will attend the school. Their attention to detail assures the



buildings will be durable places of learning for years to come.

"As we do the inspections of the structures the contractors are building, we can improve their techniques and skill levels," said Lee. "By being involved in the area, we improve (the Afghans) security, education and health."

"The contractors are very interested in our techniques and skill levels. They are eager to learn about our information and construction techniques," he said.

Lee said he was also surprised at how well the construction crews make do with the simple tools and techniques. "At one school site I inspected a well. The workers dug the well, a hole 20-30-meters deep and 60-70 centimeters in diameter, using only hand tools. I was very surprised"

In general, Lee said the materials that the crews have access to are of low quality and their skill levels need to be raised -- but if they improve those skills they will be capable of doing a very good job.

"Education is the first fundamental thing," said Lee. "We can improve (the children's) education."

"Some kids are going to grow up to be doctors; some will be president one day. So they are the hope for the future of Afghanistan. That is why it is important to build schools," said Lee.

1-508th performs little mission, lends big help

By Army Pfc. Vincent Fusco
20th Public Affairs Detachment

CHARABARAN DISTRICT, PAKTIKA PROVINCE, Afghanistan - A group of Afghan children gathered around a truck parked in the Charabaran District Center. A Soldier handed a bag of clothes and school supplies to the first child -- a very young girl who was barefoot. She will get her shoes, too, soon.

The Soldiers of 2nd Platoon, A Company, 1st Battalion, 508th Parachute Infantry Regiment handed out the supplies during a civic aid mission as part of full-spectrum operations July 30.

"We have a lot of Adopt-A-Mosque programs and single Soldiers donating things to us," said Army Sgt. 1st Class Tony L. Nathan, a platoon sergeant. "We compile all the stuff from [A Company] and the chapel and go out and give

it to the people."

The civic aid mission was part of a lead-ers engagement mission, which included medical assistance and civil affairs missions as well as combat operations, said Army 2nd Lt. Chané R. Jackson, a platoon leader.

The Soldiers of A Co., 1st Bn., 508th PIR are never doing one thing at a time.

"We do this about twice a week when we perform full-spectrum operations," said Jackson.

The school supplies are normally provided by outside sources or purchased by the unit commander. However, Jackson, Nathan and their Soldiers regularly take it upon themselves to give something to the people in their area of operations.

"Other places aren't as poor as the places here in Paktika Province," said Jackson.

The Soldiers handed out paper, coloring books, paint, markers, pens, rulers, pencils and sharpeners. The Adopt-a-Mosque program donated clothes, shoes, and a copy of the Koran that was later given to the local mosque.

"The schools are always running out of paper, pencils and pens, so we always try to hand these things out when we're doing assessments," said Nathan.

The girl who received the first donations was very reluctant to approach the Soldiers at first, but after hearing kind words from a linguist, she went up to them and received clothes, art supplies and shoes.

"She was all by herself," said Nathan. "We liked to do that because some of them are homeless and don't get a chance to get out to the bazaar.

"We're not just here to help some of the people," he said. "We're here for all Afghans."



An Afghan girl shows the clothes she received from the Soldiers of 2nd Platoon, A Company, 1st Battalion, 508th Parachute Infantry Regiment during a civic assistance mission at the Charabaran District Center July 30.



Soldiers of 2nd Platoon, A Company, 1st Battalion, 508th Parachute Infantry Regiment hand out school supplies during a civic assistance mission July 30.

Coalition emergency ordnance disposal teams destroy munitions

(Below) U.S. Army and Air Force service members prepare munitions for destruction.

By Army Sgt. Matthew MacRoberts
20th Public Affairs Detachment

Polish and U.S. service members destroyed more than 4,500 pounds of expired or confiscated munitions at East River Range Aug. 9.

The sappers and emergency ordnance disposal teams used more than 1,500 pounds of C-4 explosive to destroy grenades, rockets, recoilless rifle and artillery shells, aerial bombs, cannon rounds, small arms and ammunition of various calibers.

The resulting explosion could be felt for miles and Soldiers reported hearing the explosion from Bagram Airfield.



(Above) Polish Army Chief Warrant Officer Wlodek Dorociak examines a butterfly mine.



Photos by Sgt. Matthew MacRoberts



(Above) Polish Army Sgt. Krzysztof Maziarz, right, and U.S. Air Force Tech. Sgt. Chris Bradley, middle, and Staff Sgt. Josh Payne set up C-4 explosives to blast more than 4,500 pounds of munitions at East River Range Aug. 9.



(Above) U.S. Air Force Senior Airmen William Senecal and Polish Army Sgt. Krzysztof Maziarz, stacks recoilless rifle shells before setting explosive charges on them.



(Above) U.S. Air Force Tech Sgt. Dennis Rellins places blasting caps in blocks of C-4 explosive that were used to destroy more than 4,500 pounds of munitions at East River Range Aug. 9.

Runway reopens after C-17 incident

By Air Force Capt. Mark Gibson
455th Air Expeditionary Wing Public Affairs

BAGRAM AIRFIELD, Afghanistan - A U.S. Air Force C-17 Globemaster III aircraft rolled off the runway while landing at Bagram Airfield on Aug 6, damaging its nose and right main landing gears. As a result, the runway was closed, but quick action and creative thinking by Air Force and Army engineers had the runway fully active again in less than 30 hours.

There were no injuries in the incident.

When it came to rest, one of the C-17's wings extended over the active runway, so the aircraft had to be moved to allow the full range of aviation operations at Bagram. Air operations continued while the C-17 was moved off the active runway, and other airfields continued providing air support for Operation Enduring Freedom.

Aircraft from Bagram diverted to other airfields and were able to re-launch and conduct combat missions in support of ground forces. Other Coalition air forces also assisted in ensuring a constant airpower presence was maintained over the battlefield during the aircraft recovery operations at Bagram.

Moving the aircraft proved to be a complicated process, said Air Force Col. Donald Jones, 455th Expeditionary Mission Support Group commander, who directed the effort. "It took one big team to brainstorm and come up with the tools and methods we needed."

The hardest part of this process was determining a way to lift the nose of the aircraft without damaging the aircraft any further.

First the fuel and cargo needed to be removed. The team removed 105,000 pounds of fuel and unloaded 55,000 pounds of cargo, with the remaining gross weight of the aircraft estimated at 300,000 pounds. Because of the tilt of the aircraft, the cargo could not be removed by forklift through the cargo door. The cargo pallets had to be broken down into individual boxes, pieces and parts that were carried out through the crew door.

Next the team had to replace the C-17's unusable landing gear. Their solution was a flatbed trailer, crane, and railroad ties.

They lifted the aircraft with the crane, inches at a time. Wood was placed under the nose to support it. The team backed the flatbed tractor trailer under the nose and removed the wood. Straps were tied to the trailer and passed through the pilot's windows and open doors to secure the aircraft onto the

truck.

The team assembled metal airfield matting, provided by Army engineers with Charlie Company, 391st Engineer Battalion, to roll the aircraft onto the runway. The Army engineers also provided two bulldozers and the flatbed to drag the aircraft back onto the runway to a parking ramp.

"Once again, we had great cooperation between the Air Force and Army here. We worked together as a team to get a job done in one night that many people thought would take four days. This is the best cooperative effort between the Air Force and Army that I have seen in my 26-year career," said Army Col. Michael Flanagan, 18th Engineer Brigade and Task Force Sword commander.

Colonel Jones, knowing the priority was getting the runway open, orchestrated the two bulldozers, the flatbed, and a ring of people around the aircraft. They used hand signals and walkie-talkies as they inched the aircraft down the runway through three 90-degree turns to its parking spot.

"We had to get this runway open and get A-10s in the air to provide close air support for soldiers on the ground," said Jones.

"Everyone came together to make suggestions and form a workable plan to help get the C-17 off the active runway and resume normal flying operations in minimal time," said Air Force Brig. Gen. Bruce E. Burda, 455th Air Expeditionary Wing commander.

"I am extremely proud of the way our Airmen, Soldiers and civilians came together, devised a solution to this unique challenge, and safely made it happen to quickly restore airfield operations."

The aircraft is assigned to Charleston Air Force Base, S.C. The C-17 measures 174 feet long with a wingspan of 169 feet wide. It is operated by a crew of three and can carry up to 170,000 pounds of cargo.

The cause of the incident is under investigation.



Members of Bagram pull together to move a C-17 that ran off the runway, temporarily closing the airfield.

Photo by Air Force Capt. Mark Gibson

Conference boosts Afghan Army recruiting

By Army Sgt. Lynnette Jefferson

Office of Security Cooperation - Afghanistan Public Affairs

KABUL, Afghanistan-The Afghan National Army's Recruiting Command and the Recruiting Assistance Team from the Office of Security Cooperation-Afghanistan hosted a week-long conference for ANA recruiting personnel July 16-21.

The conference, designed to improve the skills of the Afghan army's recruiting personnel, drew ANA recruiting leaders and staff from throughout Afghanistan. Presenters discussed topics such as military entrance processing station procedures, the delayed entry program, accessions and manning issues and national army volunteer center inspections.

Afghan Army Brig. Gen. Ibrahim Ahmad Zai, the ANAREC deputy commander, said the conference was very important.

"With the help of the U.S. officers and noncommissioned officers, our officers were able to learn more about recruiting," Ahmad Zai said. "It gave the ANA an additional opportunity to strengthen their current skills."

U.S. Army Lt. Col. Clinton Dawson, director of OSC-A's Recruiting Assistance Team, addressed the conference.

"The ANA has grown from one to three recruiting academies, from seven to 31 National Army Volunteer Centers and from 100 to 260 recruiters," Dawson said. "Your teamwork made this happen. Without all of you, this would not be possible."

The conference was also an opportunity for familiarization training, medical updates and awards presentations.

ANA soldiers practiced with the AMD-65 assault rifle, received briefings on field sanitation and water treatment, and the entire staff, including civilian employees, received immunizations.

At the end of the conference, awards were presented to the top NAVC commanders for surpassing their recruiting quotas. Senior ANAREC staff officers presented plaques to Col. Karim Ullah (Kabul), Capt. Mohammad Ibrahim (Sar-e-Pul),

Col. Attig Ullah (Ghazni), Col. Abdu Qadeer (Konduz) and Col. Khair Rahman (Nangarhar) for exceeding goals within their provinces.

Dawson encouraged the soldiers present to continue the mission.

"Continue to do the good things you have been doing. What has been accomplished so far is just a small part of making a better Afghanistan," said Dawson. "Show the young men throughout the country that you are making a difference for Afghanistan, and ask them to join you in that fight."



Photo by Air Force Staff Sgt. Victoria Meyers

Afghan National Army Col. Jan Aqa, commander of the Military Entrance Processing Station in Kabul, takes notes during the last day of the Recruiting Commander's Conference July 21.



PHOTOS FROM THE FIELD

Soldiers from Alpha Company, 3rd Battalion, 141st Infantry Regiment, Texas Army National Guard, pull security during a Quick Reaction Force exercise at East River Range near Bagram, Afghanistan on June 10, 2005.

*Photo by Army Spc Harold Field
Combat Camera*

If you have high-quality photos of service members supporting the Coalition mission or enjoying well-deserved off-duty time, please e-mail them to freedomwatch@baf.afgn.army.mil. Please include full identification and caption information, including who is in the photo and what action is taking place.

Polish engineers complete key road upgrade

By Army Sgt. 1st Class Todd Oliver
CJTF-76 Public Affairs

BAGRAM AIRFIELD, Afghanistan - Polish and U.S. engineers here have completed an upgrade of a five kilometer road July 30 linking the Parwan and Kapisa Provinces.

The road was riddled with holes and often flooded when it rained making it impassable and was made of loosely compacted dirt. It would often take days to dry once flooded.

The renovation improved the road, widening it to eight meters, adding drainage systems to prevent the pooling of water and adding pipes underneath the road to allow irrigation systems to work unimpeded by traffic.

This road will contribute to the local area economy by adding a reliable avenue for the movement of goods and services.

"This is an excellent example of coalition engineers conducting construction outside the wire," said Army Col. Michael Flanagan, Task Force Sword commander. "The Polish engineers and the soldiers of Task Force Wildcat who assisted with the road's construction have dubbed it, 'Polecat Road'."

The construction of the road began May 24.

ANP disrupt enemy ambush site

By Army Sgt. 1st Class Todd Oliver
CJTF-76 Public Affairs

BAGRAM AIRFIELD, Afghanistan - Afghan National Police forces killed one enemy combatant August 6 after a brief firefight erupted near the southern Afghanistan city of Qalat.

One Afghan National Police officer was wounded in the attack and was evacuated to Kandahar Airfield for treatment.

Enemy forces ambushed the ANP patrol with small-arms fire and then immediately fled the area.

The ANP led a search of the area, assisted by U.S. patrols,

but were unable to locate the attackers.

The units were in the area at the time of the attack conducting operations designed to deny enemy forces sanctuary and freedom of movement.

"The forces that attack those charged with protecting Afghans from crime and terror are trying to prevent Afghanistan from having a bright future," said Army Lt. Col. Jerry O'Hara, Combined Joint Task Force 76 spokesperson. "Afghan forces, be they army, police or security, are striving to ensure this nation is free of terror and violence so that future Afghans might know peace and prosperity."

ANP prevent attacks

By Army Sgt. 1st Class Todd Oliver
CJTF-76 Public Affairs

BAGRAM AIRFIELD, Afghanistan - Three improvised explosive devices were discovered across southern and eastern Afghanistan Aug. 5 and 6.

Two of the devices were found after Afghan National Police reported their locations to U.S. forces in the area.

The first device, discovered near Methar Lam, was uncovered by ANP forces and reported to a company of Marines in the area.

The Marines rendered the device safe and transported it back to a nearby forward operating base where it will be destroyed at a later date.

The second device, discovered in southern Afghanistan, was also uncovered by ANP forces. ANP forces disabled the device, which consisted primarily of an anti-tank mine, and turned it over to paratroopers assigned to Task Force Bayonet. Engineers safely destroyed it a short time later.

The third device was discovered south of Ghazni by a Coalition patrol. The device was rendered safe by the patrol and was taken to a nearby FOB for destruction at a later date.

"We've reached a turning point of sorts in Afghanistan," said Army Lt. Col. Jerry O'Hara, Combined Joint Task Force-76 spokesperson. "Afghan forces and Afghan citizens are turning these items in to us more and more often."

"The Afghan people know that these devices kill innocent people and the people who detonate them are ruthless," he said.



Dari/Pashtu phrase of the week

Afghan cultural tidbit

Dari/Pashtu phrase of the week:
Can we look...?

Dari

Ma deda mayrawanaim...?

(ma-de-da may-ta-wa-nam...?)

Pashtu

Moong kawalay sho chi wa goro...?

(Moong-ka-wa-la-cho-che-wo-gu-ru...?)

An early bronze-age civilization that arose in northern Afghanistan developed an active caravan trade linking the civilizations of the Indus Valley and Mesopotamia. The finest lapis lazuli in the world was brought west from the Afghan highlands of Badakhshan to Sumer and Egypt 5,000 years ago by this route. Later, ancient Actria, in northern Afghanistan, was joined to India by a 4,200-kilometer road built by India's Maurya dynasty, and was linked to Central Asia and the Middle East by the imperial highways of Persians.

(Source: http://portal.unesco.org/en/ev.php-URL_ID=6646&URL_DO=DO-TOPIC&URL-SECTION=201.html)

Medical outreach visit helps hundreds

By Army Sgt. 1st Class Todd Oliver
CJTF-76 Public Affairs

BAGRAM AIRFIELD, Afghanistan - Paratroopers and medical personnel assigned to the 2nd Battalion, 503rd Parachute Infantry Regiment treated more than 600 Afghans, and their farm animals, in the Nawbahar Village. The village is located north of Kandahar and is the former homeland of the Taliban.

The village medical outreach visit, or VMO, treated 616 people. One hundred and four people also received dental treatment during the visit. Veterinarians with the group also treated hundreds of farm animals.

The paratroopers assisted local police forces fix their patrol vehicles and motorcycles and taught several maintenance classes to the ANP.

"These VMO visits are an excellent way for our forces to interact with Afghans and to show them that we are in Afghanistan to help," said Army Dr. (Col.) Rich Trotta, Combined Joint Task Force-76 surgeon. "This part of Afghanistan was once a stronghold of the Taliban, but now we're seeing more and more of the people who live there working with our forces and welcoming our presence. Our medical and veterinarian experts are able to help the people and their livestock in many of Afghanistan's smaller, remote villages."

16 enemy, 1 U.S. killed in fighting near Deh Chopan

By Army Sgt. 1st Class Todd Oliver
CJTF-76 Public Affairs

BAGRAM AIRFIELD, Afghanistan - At least 16 enemy combatants and one U.S. service member were killed Aug. 8 during a firefight southwest of Deh Chopan.

The service member was killed when an Afghan and U.S. patrol conducting operations aimed at routing enemy forces from the Deh Chopan area came under attack from enemy forces with small-arms fire and rocket propelled grenades. U.S. and Coalition aircraft arrived on scene and provided close air support.

Initial estimates indicate at least 16 enemy combatants were killed. Non-combatants were not involved in the attack.

"While we are bringing the fight to the enemy forces in the area and experiencing great successes against them it comes at a heavy cost," said Army Brig. Gen. James G. Champion, Combined Joint Task Force-76 deputy commanding general (operations.)

"We are greatly saddened by the loss of one of our own but are able to take solace in the fact that we are ridding this area of an oppressive and violent enemy."

"Afghan and U.S. forces will continue this search and attack mission to ensure there are no enemy safe havens in this region."

Task Forces Bayonet, Devil find Caches

By Army Sgt. 1st Class Todd Oliver
CJTF-76 Public Affairs

BAGRAM AIRFIELD, Afghanistan - Three caches of munitions were discovered across southern and eastern Afghanistan Aug. 2.

The first cache was discovered near Bamyan and consisted of 60 rocket-propelled grenades, 17 anti-tank missiles and 600 rounds of anti-aircraft gun ammunition.

Another cache was near Kabul and consisted of 20 hand grenades, one anti-personnel mine, one mortar round and improvised explosive device construction materials. The contents of this cache were considered too volatile to move and were destroyed by explosive ordnance disposal personnel at the scene.

The third cache was discovered near Kandahar and consisted of an unusual amount of fertilizer and plastic explosives. The fertilizer and plastic explosive were transported back Kandahar Airfield by explosive ordnance disposal personnel.

"These munitions are dangerous," said Army Brig. Gen. Jack Sterling, Combined Joint Task Force-76 deputy commanding general. "Not only are they unstable, but they can be used in the construction of improvised explosive devices that kill and wound innocent Afghans. We consider the recovery and removal of these munitions to be a key step in making Afghanistan a safer place."

Former taliban commander joins forces with Afghan government

By Army Sgt. 1st Class Todd Oliver
CJTF-76 Public Affairs

BAGRAM AIRFIELD, Afghanistan - A former Taliban sub-commander in Paktika Province has renounced violence against the government of Afghanistan, further fragmenting the Taliban command structure in Eastern Afghanistan.

Mullah Hajji Jalani formally joined the PTS program Aug. 4.

The terrorist cell he was formerly associated with has been accused of conducting and planning a variety of attacks against the Afghan people, the Afghan government and Afghan and Coalition forces, said a U.S. official.

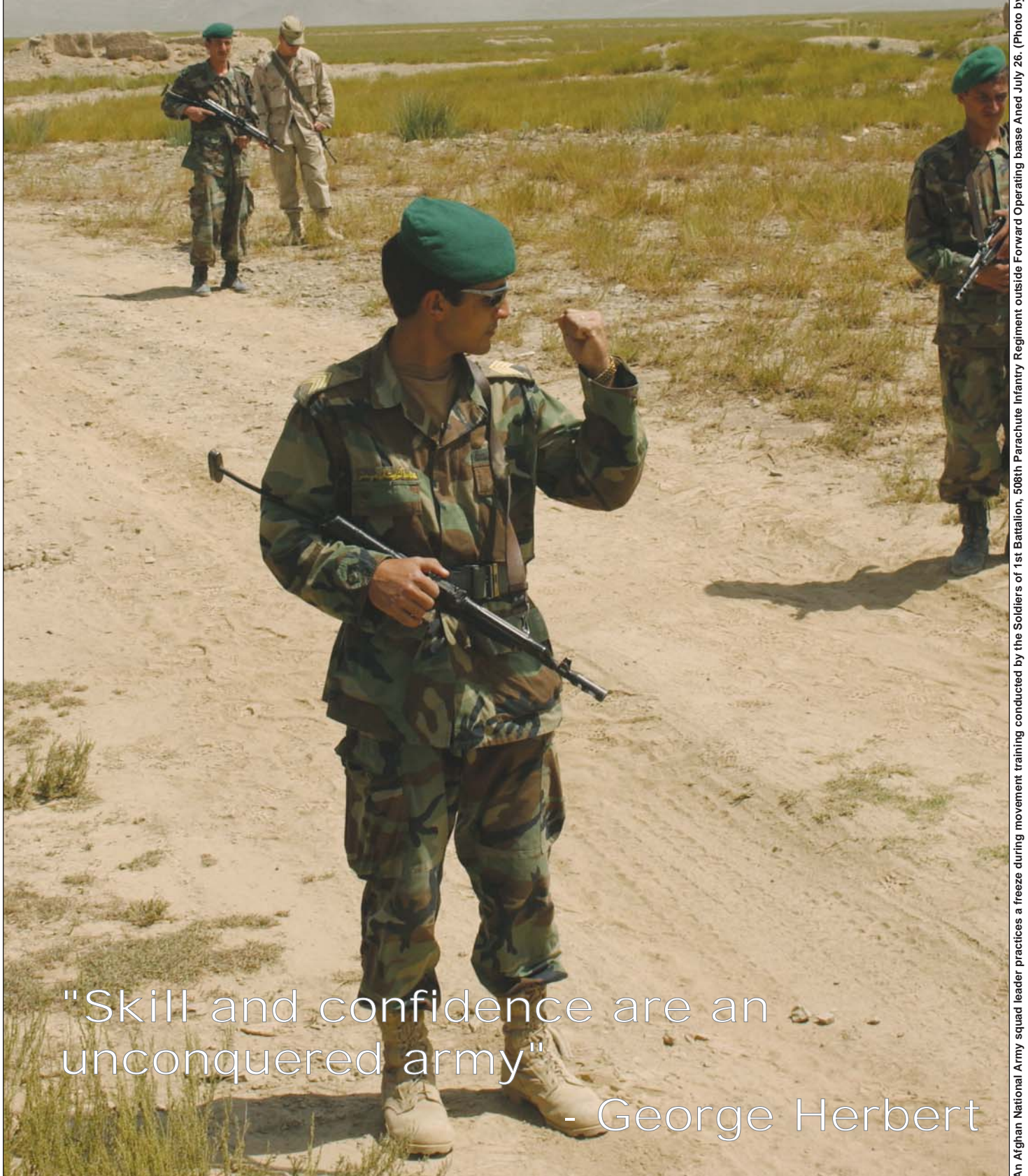
"The fact that Mullah Hajji Jalani has joined with the government of Afghanistan is a positive sign Afghanistan is moving in the right direction," said Army Brig. Gen. James G. Champion, Combined Joint Task Force-76 deputy commanding general (operations.) "It's a sign the government of this country is making real and measurable progress toward better security and a brighter future. Mullah Hajji Jalani has realized this and has joined with the government to make Afghanistan a better place for all who live here."

As a result of Mullah Hajji Jalani's decision to enroll in the PTS program, another 12 former Taliban loyalists have come forward in that province seeking more information regarding the program and have expressed interest in enrolling.

The PTS program is a tool the government of Afghanistan uses to encourage former regime members to renounce violence and join with the government to build a more secure Afghanistan. During the past six months, more than 100 former Taliban regime members have joined the program.

Freedom Watch

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"Skill and confidence are an unconquered army"
- George Herbert